

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-10 DOTE-00 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 L-03 HEW-06 /037 R

DRAFTED BY USDA:RFGUILFOY/IO/CMD:LEKAHN:CB

APPROVED BY IO/CMD;WWWOODBURY

USDA:MWITCHER

DOT:RBRONEZ

COMMERCE:VCGREY

----- 071288

R 171658Z JUN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS STATE 141404

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECE, OCON

SUBJECT: ECE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON TRANSPORT OF PERISHABLE

- FOODSTUFFS (TWENTY-NINTH SESSION, JULY 21-25, 1975)

MISSION REQUESTED TRANSMIT FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO ECE SECRETARIAT IN RESPONSE TO PARAGRAPH 31 OF TRANS/GE.11/2, WHICH REQUESTED COMMENTS RE MONITORING INSIDE TEMPERATURE OF EQUIPMENT CARRYING PERISHABLE FOODSTUFFS:

1. DURING THE PERIOD OF FEBRUARY-APRIL 1975, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONDUCTED A SURVEY CONCERNING THE USE OF AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDERS IN THE UNITED STATES. A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS SENT TO EIGHT MAJOR CARRIERS OF PERISHABLE FOODS WHICH HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN SUCH TRANSPORTATION AND ARE AMONG THE LEADERS IN THEIR INDUSTRY. THE EIGHT CARRIERS WERE COMPOSED OF TWO RAILROAD CARRIERS, TWO LONG-DISTANCE HIGHWAY CARRIERS, AND FOUR OCEAN CARRIERS OF CONTAINERS.

2. THE CARRIERS WERE ASKED TO COMMENT ON SIX DIFFERENT

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POINTS. FOLLOWING ARE THOSE POINTS ALONG WITH A SUMMARY OF COMMENT RECEIVED FROM THE CARRIERS:

- (A) EXTENT TO WHICH RECORDERS ARE USED. THREE OF THE CARRIERS DO NOT USE RECORDERS IN GENERAL TRANSPORT SERVICE, ALTHOUGH RECORDERS MAY BE USED IN TESTS OR OTHER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE OTHER FIVE CARRIERS USE RECORDERS TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT. ONE OF THOSE CARRIERS HAS RECORDERS INSTALLED IN ALL VEHICLES.
- (B) RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY OF RECORDERS. FOUR CARRIERS ADVISE THAT THEIR RECORDERS ARE RELIABLE AND ACCURATE. THE OTHER FOUR CARRIERS INDICATE THAT RECORDERS ARE NOT FULLY RELIABLE AND ACCURATE.
- (C) CALIBRATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDERS. FOUR OF THE CARRIERS, WHO USE THE PERMANENTLY INSTALLED TYPE OF RECORDER, CALIBRATE RECORDERS BEFORE EACH TRIP. A FIFTH CARRIER, WHO ALSO USES THE PERMANENTLY INSTALLED TYPE OF RECORDER, CALIBRATES RECORDERS TWICE PER YEAR. THE SIXTH CARRIER, WHO OCCASIONALLY USES A PORTABLE TYPE RECORDER, CALIBRATES THOSE RECORDERS AFTER EACH TRIP. THE TWO REMAINING CARRIERS USE NEITHER PERMANENTLY INSTALLED NOR PORTABLE RECORDERS.
- (D) ABILITY OF THE RECORDER TO MEASURE PRODUCT TEMPERATURE. SEVEN OF THE CARRIERS ADVISE THAT AN AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDER IS NOT A RELIABLE MEASURE OF PRODUCT TEMPERATURE. THE EIGHTH CARRIER CONSIDERS THAT AN AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDER IS A GOOD MEASURE OF PRODUCT TEMPERATURE, WITH QUALIFICATION.
- (E) AIR TEMPERATURE INDICATOR VERSUS RECORDER. FOUR OF THE CARRIERS PREFER A TEMPERATURE INDICATOR WHICH AN INSPECTOR CAN READ AT INSPECTION STOPS DURING THE TRIP. THREE CARRIERS PREFER A TEMPERATURE RECORDER. THE EIGHTH CARRIER RELIES MAINLY UPON A HAND THERMOMETER INSERTED INTO THE PRODUCT, WHILE USING RECORDERS OR INDICATORS FOR ONLY GENERAL INDICATION OF TEMPERATURE.
- (F) MANDATORY REQUIREMENT FOR RECORDERS. SIX OF THE
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EIGHT CARRIERS ARE OPPOSED TO MANDATORY USE OF AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDERS. THE SEVENTH CARRIER BELIEVES RECORDERS TO BE BENEFICIAL, AND THE EIGHTH CARRIER HAD NO COMMENT.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY INDICATE THAT IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL TO REQUIRE THAT EVERY VEHICLE USED TO TRANSPORT PERISHABLE FOODS BE EQUIPPED WITH AN AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDER. REASONS AGAINST MANDATORY USE OF RECORDERS ARE ESSENTIALLY AS FOLLOWS:

(A) THE COST OF PURCHASE, INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE, CALIBRATION, AND USE OF RECORDERS WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE.

- (B) RECORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO FAILURE, DAMAGE, AND ABUSE.

- (C) SHIPPERS, CARRIERS, AND RECEIVERS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN PRODUCT TEMPERATURE, WHEREAS THE RECORDER SHOWS AIR TEMPERATURE WHICH MAY BE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT.

- (D) THE RECORD PRODUCED BY AN AIR TEMPERATURE RECORDER IS OPEN TO VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS AND POSSIBLE ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS.

4. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT MANDATORY USE OF RECORDERS WOULD INVOLVE EXPENSE AND PROBLEMS FAR OUT OF PROPORTION TO POSSIBLE BENEFITS, AND THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE IN FAVOR OF INCLUSION OF SUCH A REQUIREMENT IN THE ATP AGREEMENT. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE141404
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: USDA:RFGUILFOY/IO/CMD:LEKAHN:CB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750211-0104
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197506101/baaaamvg.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 Sep 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: OCON, ECE
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006